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FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5997
INFO RUCNMGH/MAGHREB COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHMK/AMEMBASSY MANAMA PRIORITY 0122

C O N F I D E N T I A L TUNIS 000104

SIPDIS

NEA/MAG (PATTERSON/HAYES)
LONDON AND PARIS FOR NEA WATCHER

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KPAO](#) [IR](#) [TS](#)
SUBJECT: TUNISIA ISSUES STATEMENT SUPPORTING BAHRAIN'S
SOVEREIGNTY

Classified By: Ambassador Robert F. Godec for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (U) After statements by Ali Akbar Natiq Nuri, advisor to Iran's Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, regarding Bahrain's sovereignty, an authorized source in the GOT issued a statement in support of Bahrain.

12. (U) The text of the Tunisian statement (as translated by the official Agence Tunis Afrique Presse) is as follows:

Tunis, February 21, 2009 (TAP) - In response to a question on the recent Iranian statements on Bahrain, an authorized source from the Foreign Ministry gave the following answer:

"Based on its commitment to the principles of respect for state's sovereignty and non-interference in their affairs, and in reaffirmation of the fraternal relations binding it to the Kingdom of Bahrain and Iran, Tunisia deplores the statements prejudicial to Bahrain's sovereignty and independence, or questioning its Arab origin; these statements run against the principles of good neighborhoods and the bonds of brotherhood which should distinguish relations tying Islamic states.

Tunisia also calls for concord in relations between all states of the region, in order to strengthen the ties of co-operation and of constructive fraternal rapprochement, and the climate of confidence among these countries, to serve the region's security and stability."

Comment

13. (C) In December 2007, Esam Yousif Janahi, chairman of the Bahrain Financial Harbor, announced the investment of US \$3 billion for the creation of a Tunis Financial Harbor. In addition, in October 2008, Bahrain signed an agreement with Tunisia allowing Tunisian university graduates to work in Bahrain. In February 2008, the International Investment Bank of Bahrain announced the investment of US \$40 million in an un-named Tunisian company. Though the Government of Bahrain may have requested a statement of support, the GOT's financial interests, suspicions about Iran's regional aspirations, and a desire to support another Arab country no doubt helped motivate the government to make the statement.
End Comment.
Godec